Softening Edges

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Summary

Hanzo has a nightmare.

Cole is there to comfort his precious lover.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

It was one of those nights.

Hanzo would often wake up in the middle of the night, chest heaving and his consciousness clouded by a heavy mist of mixed bitter feelings; fear, anticipation, paranoia…, all of them clogging his throat as they formed a hefty ball of anxiety.

Always the same, cornered in his dreams by the relentless regrets that he tended to carelessly ignore; the ever flowing blood in his hands that gathered on the valleys imprinted on his skin by hundreds of years old and deadly sharp blades had once created.

The strain on his muscles prepared him for a danger that never came or existed outside his imagination to begin with. Still, the tension kept him from falling back to sleep, from letting his mind at ease once more during woeful nights like this.

It left Hanzo wondering, without fail, if he'd someday lose his sanity from confusing his current reality and the dreams that manifested as ghosts of a shameful past so often.

Right at this moment, Hanzo stood frozen in front of their bedroom mirror, the light from the street lamp right outside their window casted shadows that tricked Hanzo's perception of self; his figure misshaped into something he so hard tried to ignore.

The longer he looked at the barely there silhouette the more the dimness around him revealed what he deeply yearned to forget.

What he saw looked, and *felt* , inhumane. Like a distorted thought of what liveliness might've felt like to him, as if his brain had been wired backwards and doomed to an ever lasting notion of half-fullness, unfinished, a work left behind in sake of something better. Something far more beautiful than whatever he could've been.

A pitch black hunger that equally hollowed and inundated his already brimming chest. At all times reaching for something and every time, despite the ravenous, burning, greed, backing up when it felt too close to *too good* , staring back at happiness with hot with impotent tears running down his face along marred and trembling hands, questioning if he'd ever get a taste of the redemption he so deeply yearned, consider himself enough to deserve *good.*

Even so, he longed for this type of suffering, taking comfort in the familiarity of it all.

His fingertips tingled where they were still on his side, unresponsive. An invisible weight sat heavily on his shoulders, fogging up his ears with the constant ringing of his darkening thoughts.

A few seconds passed before said weight lightened, leaving him disoriented as his attention struggled to escape somewhere where he didn't have to worry, to *think* and *feel* more than he could manage anymore; just be.

Tonight reassembled one of the many nights where he had laid on the floor, staring at the ceiling with dry, red eyes, until his body simply decided to give out.

His vision began to blur and surroundings to distort, a suffocating mist took over his perception twisting his reality into a concurring nightmare, throwing him into a painfully lit dojo and drenching him in a faint coppery smell and sickeningly warmth all over his palms, forearms and cheeks.

“ *I’m sorry,* ” he muttered in a quiet, broken tone, “ *brother. I’m so sorry.* ” until a sob tore through his sorrowful chant.

Right in front of him, during a fleeting moment, laid a corpse; a kimono stained red and a stomach twisting picture of an unforgiving murder.

Hanzo’s breath caught in his throat, almost coughing back out the saliva building up there, he gave out a pitiful, defeated whimper as his shaking legs couldn’t support his own weight anymore.

So close yet so far.

As he reached for the damaged body with ragged breaths he caught a glimpse of his own stiff fingers on the long forgotten mirror and stilled.

Nothing, there was nothing in front of him; no blood, no metal taste, no wet breathing and the rattling of a crushed windpipe… All that the mirror revealed back to him was a looming body and bare hands hovering over the idea of something that wasn’t there to begin with.

“Hanzo?”

His body jerked in surprise as it moved in autopilot, he launched himself into the shape that had appeared next to him, grabbing blindly at whatever he could get a hold on and digging his nails on tendons and thin skin.

There was a choking sound.

“It’s o–” a sharp intake of air, “It’s okay, sugar, iss me...”

Hanzo couldn’t register the words spoken to him, putting more impetus into squeezing, half conscious and moving out of pure instinct. It was as if he had completely lost connection and therefore control of his body, his sight blurred at the edges progressively and Hanzo felt as though all thought processing function had completely escaped him, leaving him a body to drown in.

There was an emerging pressure on his forearms, a tight squeeze followed by another, then another and another…

“Come back to me, darlin’.” a trembling palm travelled slowly up his arm until it reached his shoulder and rested on his jaw, a repetitive yet comforting motion bloomed with an intimate and familiar warmth.

It shielded him from the nauseating, slippery thickness and, instead, brought him back to the *joyful, tender* , *beautiful* side of being present, of being fortunate enough to feel an attentive

and intimate warmth. Like feeling the hotness of a freshly brewed tea against mostly inmovile and bruised fingers after hours of hard training under an exceptionally cold day.

Hanzo's own breath was harsh and painful, his chest hurt with the pressure of his ribs caging his lungs.

"Don't make me hurt you…" the hand left his face, moving a purther noticeable pressure to Hanzo's forearms, "Han."

Hanzo blinked slowly as a terrifying amount of awareness downed heavily on him.

He gasped, horrified, and launched himself the opposite way. As he kept trying to come back to his senses the blurry figure took a much more recognisable shape, turning into one that Hanzo should've been able to recognize by smell alone.

He kept watching as Cole got caught into a coughing fit, frozen and in disbelief of the scene laid out in front of him.

In a panic, he stood up on unsteady legs almost tripping as he made his way to the nearest light switch. Once the room lit up, fear made its way through his body.

"Cole?" He hurried to the night table where he kept a glass of water and tried his hardest not to let his shaky hands spill the still slightly cold liquid before getting to his partner.

His anxiety rose as he watched Cole take the water from his hand and drink it slowly, stopping intermittently to cough in between sips. Every time Cole would wince through a particularly painful swallow he felt his heart squeeze and writhe in sympathy and crushing guilt.

He wanted to reach out but his muscles stayed locked tight, even breathing was starting to hurt. His eyes darted nervously, alternating between worrying silently to death while examining Cole and losing himself to his own frightening thoughts while staring at the blank walls.

Cole set the half full glass down and sat up unhurriedly, Hanzo averted his gaze, too scared of whatever might happen next. It never got old; waiting for rejection or a punch in the face after the smallest of mistakes.

After a few seconds of agonising silence Hanzo heard dragging next to him.

"Hanzo."

His heart thumped in his chest, his face felt too hot and his eyes began to sting.

He felt undeserving of being referred to with such tenderness, undeserving of being seen as nothing more than a blood bathed monster.

"Baby, look at me." Hanzo refused, looking out the window instead of facing what he had done, "C'mon, pretty boy, I'm not mad."

Hanzo sobbed. Still not knowing what to do with himself, as if he dared to move or breathe a little too hard hell would break loose.

“Can I hold you?” Hanzo nodded weakly, he was then rewarded with the softest and full of fondness laugh, “Here, love.”

Cole opened his arms in a tempting invitation, his legs were stretched out as well so that Hanzo could fill in the space between them as he wished.

Hanzo shortened the distance between them carefully, inch by inch, ready to stop if at any time Cole decided to change his mind and throw him out the bedroom and tell him to never come back. He'd gladly leave if that meant a lighter and brighter life for Cole; no last kiss, no looking back.

But Cole was patient, oh was he patient. His smile was bright despite the evident traces of tiredness around his quavering lips, his arms shaked lightly with effort and lingering adrenaline, his chest trembling under the thin fabric of one of Hanzo’s favourite shirts for Cole to use.

Hanzo sobbed even harder at the sight of his neck; an imitation of his hands growing dark purple by the second.

Cole embraced him before Hanzo could fall and shatter into a million pieces, “It’s okay, I’m okay.”

Cole held onto Hanzo tightly, rocking him carefully from side to side and whispering sweet nothings into his ears to calm him down.

I’m not mad, baby, I swear.

Please don’t cry.

Are you okay?

Please, precious, tell me you didn’t hurt yourself again.

Hanzo gave in pleasantly, melting under every lingering kiss on his neck, his cheeks, his lips.

“Missed you in our bed, sweetness.” Cole whispered against dry lips before leaving a soft kiss that Hanzo sighed shakingly under, “Missed feeling you all upon me while I’m

sleeping."

"Sorry," Hanzo croaked, still too ashamed to look Cole in the eyes.

"I told you, honey, I'm not–"

Hanzo backed up abruptly, anger painting his features red. "No! You should be!" He felt tears flow heavily where the old ones had left a salty trace, "You should be!" He shook Cole's shoulders harshly. "Look! Look what–" His throat closed up and breathing became a difficult thing to do once more.

Cole lifted Hanzo's head slightly until he was staring at the white ceiling. "Deep breaths first, beautiful."

And so Hanzo did, he felt an immediate relief as he felt Cole's hands stroke his jittery body trying to soothe the tension everywhere he could.

He tried hard not to cry when he looked back at Cole and was met with soft, glimmering eyes and a gentle smile, he really did, but it was so difficult when the person you loved the most was the first to get hurt when one felt too weak to keep a broken mind at bay.

"Why–" Cole answered with a hush followed by a hum but, despite the chance, Hanzo gave up on his efforts to keep himself from breaking down, "Why do you keep bearing with this?"

At times like this Hanzo felt like a wounded child, often waiting for Cole to stretch a benevolent hand at his piteous self and offer a solid yet cosy chest to cry and snot all over. Often crumbling down when a touch was a tiny bit more tender than usual, a smile wider than normal and a kiss lingering sweetly longer on his lips.

At times like this Hanzo saw himself as too fragile to continue, too frail to go on on his own. He needed Cole to be his pillar, at all times; it was nearing a case of unhealthy dependency.

Hanzo was well aware of it.

What would Hanzo do without him? Once he decided that it had been enough for him? Once he had gotten tired of *ole'* Hanzo and his *lil'* night terrors and sleepwalking.

"I keep–" every word clawed at his chest, "I keep *hurting* you." Hanzo attempted to soothe the bruising area but jerked back instinctively, too afraid of what he might be able to do, "I am *tired* of hurting you," he choked out, "…are you not?" he wheezed, wiping unceremoniously the snot nearing his lips with the back of his hand.

Hanzo tried to not show his surprise when Cole took off his shirt and raised it to his face.

"Blow." Hanzo stared at him blankly, "You'll feel better, I swear."

"This is so humiliating."

Even so, he did it.

And indeed, felt better.

“There you go.”

It was a little easier now to breathe – to *think* – even.

Cole kept caressing him; warm hands on his sides, firm fingers digging just right on tense muscles on his back, shoulders and chest.

It was starting to get the opposite reaction out of him, the explanation as to why he had been crying escaped his mind, new sensations rising to take its place instead.

“Just like that, pretty thing,” Cole whispered, his voice as thick as molasses and as consuming, “relax.”

Hanzo noticed that he was starting to slip, he could tell by the way everything started to dim and sounding distant, his body melting under Cole’s deft fingers, his voice a constant hum that lulled him into a sweet state of vibrancy.

“Hanny,” Cole’s voice took him back to the present, grinning sweetly as Hanzo blinked owlishly at him, “Is it okay if I ask for a hug?”

Cole wetted his lips nervously, making Hanzo confused for a moment. Did Cole really think Hanzo would have the heart to deny him anything…? Ever…?

Hanzo tried his best to smile, trying to show Cole that yes, he could do that and anything Cole could ask of him. Everything.

Relief washed over both of them when Cole smiled back as sweetly as always.

Hanzo embraced Cole wholly, skin on skin. He welcomed the warmth eagerly, sighing and loosening up even further when Cole held him in return, spreading wide hands on his lower back and resuming with his kisses wherever he could reach.

“Thanks, dear.”

Hanzo let himself feel. Let himself believe that he was deserving of feeling and giving out love, deserving of somebody to turn to, deserving of vulnerability.

“I want you to touch me, baby, don’t be scared.”

He leaned forward in a rush, almost tipping both of them over as he kissed Cole fiercely, making the man moan softly when he rolled his hips sharply, a zap of pleasure invading their body and spurring them on.

“Alright, maybe–” a hiss of pleasure left Cole’s lips, “maybe… babe–” Hanzo moved to his neck, never stopping the sweet friction between their legs, “Han– *hmmm shit!”* he moaned when Hanzo sucked and licked at a particularly sensitive point on his neck.

“Hanzo!”

Hanzo stilled, the fear must have reflected on his face unfiltered when Cole added hurriedly, “I’d love nothing more but to fuck you right now–” Hanzo whined and bucked, making Cole hiss a second time when a new spark of pleasure ran up his spine, “but! But, we really should go back to bed,” Hanzo agreed with a slight and full of shame nod. “Thanks.”

Cole placed a short yet sweet kiss on his lips, Hanzo chased after it making the other man chuckle.

“Promise we’ll do that tomorrow, hm? Make you come as many times as you want me to.”

Hanzo whined, “Morning.”

Cole’s snicker turned into a full fit of laughter and Hanzo could only stare dumbly at him, marvelling on the sound. “Morning sex it is, then.”

They got on their feet as swiftly as they could, Cole’s legs and ass had gone numb from sitting for too long on the floor while supporting Hanzo’s weight.

Hanzo took pity on him and helped him back to the bed, turning off the lights and scooping inhumanly close when Cole turned to him with open arms.

Right there and then Hanzo felt like he could give happiness a chance, even if he had to convince himself he was deserving of it each passing day.

All over again.

End Notes

thanks for reading!! comments are very much appreciated <3

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